

MISSIONARY STRATEGIES OF CHRIST

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It has been almost two thousand years since our Savior and Sovereign, Jesus Christ, shortly before His return to Heaven, left certain marching orders for His subjects: "Make disciples in all ethnic nations", "Preach the Gospel to every person", "You will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth". However, even at this stage of the game the followers of Jesus have scarcely managed to get halfway. Probably a third of the ethnic nations in the world have yet to meet their apostle, and I doubt that much more than a third of them will have a true disciple of Jesus among their members. Half of the individual people in the world, apart from ethnic membership, have yet to hear the Gospel for the first time. To **hear**, let alone understand.

What should we think when faced with such a situation?! Did not the Lord Jesus expect to be obeyed? He just liked to talk, enjoyed the sound of His own voice? No. He was serious, obviously. So much so that the first generation, that of the Apostles, practically reached its world. They did wonders—and that without cars, planes, radio, TV, computers, etc. Even so, they reached their world, beginning with a handful of people. They achieved all that precisely because they took Christ's commands seriously, apparently understanding their strategic effect. Alas, as the years went by the Church lost the perspective that the Apostles had received from Jesus, with the tragic consequence that from then till now Christ's commands have generally been ignored or misunderstood. Yes, misunderstood, because there are many today who think they are obeying one or another of the commands but without understanding its true meaning, to say nothing of its strategic content.

Now then, if the Apostles managed to reach their world in one generation, why can we not do the same? Why should we not repeat that achievement? I sincerely believe that all we would have to do is recover Christ's missionary strategies, contained in His commands, and order our lives and ministries on that basis. I believe we could finish reaching the world within our generation. Actually, everything leads me to believe that Jesus is coming soon, our time is getting short. Perhaps we need go no further than Luke 21:24—I take it that Jerusalem stopped being "trodden down by the Gentiles", in the prophetic sense of the word, in 1967 when the city of Jerusalem returned to the control of the nation of Israel for the first time since the Lord spoke those words. And, "when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. I tell you assuredly, this generation will by no means pass away till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21:31-32). The interrelationship between the return of Christ and transcultural missions will be discussed presently.

Again I insist: if the mass of evangelical believers, starting right now, will wake up to and start implementing Christ's missionary strategies, we can finish reaching the world in this generation. You think that is preposterous? Please evaluate what follows with care.

Pray to the Lord for Laborers

Let us begin with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that we find in Matthew 9:37-38. "The harvest is great but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

The Great Harvest

This word, addressed to His disciples, begins with the harvest that lies before us—it is great. If it was great two millennia ago, imagine today! In Matthew 28:19 the Lord Jesus commands us to make disciples in all "nations". That word 'nation' is a translation of the Greek word from which we get such words as 'ethnic' and 'ethnology'. We find the same word in Revelation 5:9, listed with the words 'tribe', 'language' and 'people' (see also Revelation 7:9, 11:9 and 14:6). It refers to a people defined ethnically. Any people that is distinct from all other peoples in the world in terms of language and culture is a 'nation' as far as the Great Commission given in Matthew 28:19 is concerned.

So then, since Jesus commands us to make disciples in **all** of them, how many are there in today's world? It depends. Different sources use differing criteria, with different results. The U. S. Center for World Mission, that has done so much to challenge God's people with the unreached peoples of the world, informs us that there are around 12,000 such peoples. That is the unreached ones—the peoples

that have been 'reached' also number some 12,000 (evidently there is a great disparity in the size of these peoples, some very large, some very small; in general the populous peoples are among the reached and the small groups among the unreached). It happens that the Center defines 'people' mainly in cultural terms, so that a number of such peoples may speak the same language.

On the other hand, the Wycliffe Bible Translators preferred to define peoples in terms of language. The twelfth edition of their *Ethnologue* (1992) lists over 6,500 languages spoken in the world today. The declared policy of the editors is to err on the careful side, using information that is considered to be reasonably valid. Since there are areas of the world about which we lack such information and since the advent of better information usually adds languages to the list I personally have no doubt that there are over 6,000 distinct, viable languages in today's world. I conclude that to really fulfill Matthew 28:19 we will have to translate God's Word into all those languages, because of the terms of the Commission. So then, I prefer to define 'nation' in terms of **language** and culture. I gather that there are at least 6,000 such ethnic nations in the world today.

In Mark 16:15 the Lord Jesus commanded us to preach the Gospel to every person. In July, 1986 the newspapers declared that sometime during the month the population of the world would break the five billion mark. Today the total population is well over six billion. Six billion—it is hard to imagine so many people! But there they are. That is our harvest, and is it ever great! Six thousand ethnic nations and six billion individual people.

The Few Laborers

Returning to Matthew 9:37, the Lord Jesus then declares that the laborers are few. Well, faced with such a harvest one might conclude that the workers will always be too few. In fact, it seems to me that many believers have already given up—they are resigned to the idea that the Church will never reach the world.

The fact is that at this point in history the laborers are not just 'few'. For many places and peoples they are nonexistent—there simply are not any! I believe it is true to say that **half** of the ethnic nations in today's world, 3,000 of the 6,000 therefore, do not yet have their apostle of Jesus Christ.

And what about the individual people? It is the same tragic picture. Those who are researching this question tell us that half of the persons in the world, that is 3 billion, have yet to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ (at least with some understanding). There you have a world-class calamity. Whether we measure by individual or by nation, that is the picture: half the world waiting to hear, half the ethnic nations without an apostle. This in spite of the fact that Christ's Church has been around for almost 2,000 years.

It is true that the picture has been improving. The statistics 200 years ago were a whole lot worse. The missionary effort of the last 200 years has made a tremendous difference. In Africa and in Asia the Church is growing at an impressive rate. Just the Wycliffe Bible Translators have worked with over 1,000 languages (one sixth of the total), and that during the last fifty years. If work were begun with another ethnic group about every ten days, on the average, at that rate it would still take 100 years to reach the last 'nation'. We must improve, because it is unlikely that God will give us that much time.

The Missionary Strategy

The command, or strategy, that we find in Matthew 9:38 is to the point: pray to the Lord of the harvest for laborers. It is absolutely necessary that there be a laborer for each people, for each place, and the remedy that Jesus prescribes is to pray for laborers. Note that we are confronted with an order, not a suggestion. Jesus **commands** us to pray for laborers, but are we doing it, do you suppose? Should we not be obeying at least this command, since it is apparently something that any believer could do? How about your church, are you obeying this command—say, every Sunday? If not, why not? Why not start now! And how about in your personal life? Could we not spend one minute each day—say, as you get dressed or comb your hair—crying out to God to raise up and send out workers to the lost world, to the unreached ethnic nations? Please note that nobody may say he is too poor to pray, or too uneducated to pray. Any believer can pray, no matter how lowly. Right? So here we have at least one of Christ's commands that is within everyone's reach. However, there seems to be some difficulty since apparently not many people are really obeying this command. Let us consider the strategy more closely.

What might the strategic content of this command be? Well, if I am going to pray to God for laborers I should be sincere, don't you think? I should be consistent—no? So then, if I, being sincere and consistent, cry to God for laborers I myself must be ready to hear God's answer. Surely, because some fine day God may say to me: "That's good, my child, I hear you, loud and clear; now then, one of those I want to send is **you!**" Any problem? Or else He may say: "I won't send you to another nation but you must contribute more than you have been to support those that I do send." And certainly God will require more intercession from all of us. There you have the strategic effect of this command: if each evangelical believer would obey at least this order in a sincere and consistent way, there would be no lack of laborers, no lack of money to support them and no lack of intercession, spiritual backing to ensure the work. We would take the world by storm! Only it is not happening, right? That is the problem—to obey this command requires **commitment**. We need consider the point only a little to see clearly that we cannot obey even this command without being truly committed to Christ and His kingdom.

I believe that at every step we will verify that the essential problem is this: there is a lack of commitment to Jesus and His cause. The tragic consequence of this fact is that half the world continues to perish without having heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, let us commit ourselves without reserve to Sovereign Jesus and His cause, really and truly. What a tremendous harvest it is that awaits us—3 billion people who have not heard, 3,000 ethnic nations without an apostle. And Jesus is coming!

Simultaneously Reach Jerusalem . . . and the Ends of the Earth

Now let us consider the words of the Lord Jesus that we find in Acts 1:8. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." They are the last words that He spoke here on earth before returning to Heaven, His body about to lift off the ground. Would He not have chosen those words with care? Without doubt, and doubtless He expects us to pay close attention to them. Even on a superficial reading it is clear that Christ is concerned for the whole world. But beyond this obvious meaning His words contain a strategy, a tremendous strategy, a strategy capable of reaching the world in one generation!

The Strategy

As often happens in the Bible, the secret is in the small words, in this case "both . . . and . . . and". Please note that Jesus did not say: "You will be witnesses to me **first** in Jerusalem, **then** in all Judea and Samaria, and **finally, if there is ever any people, time and money left over**, to the ends of the earth." (Is that not the attitude of many Christians, judging by their actions?) No, the statement reads "both . . . and . . . and", which is to say, simultaneously. We must work to reach our "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria" and the ends of the earth **simultaneously**. If our evangelical churches, across the board, will really commit themselves to this strategy we will finish reaching the world in this generation. If the Apostles did it, why cannot we?

The Apostles, and presumably the generation that they discipled, evidently understood and obeyed this strategy. So much so that in that generation, beginning with a handful of people (and without modern technology), they managed to practically reach their world. The Apostle Paul made plans to visit the Iberian Peninsula. If we can trust the tradition of the Church, the Apostle Thomas actually managed to get to the south of India! But after the apostolic age the Church, in the main, lost that vision, and that is how things stood throughout the centuries until the age of modern missions.

The deplorable consequence of the loss of that vision is that down through the centuries and to this day the majority of people are born, live and die without ever hearing of Jesus Christ. That is the greatest tragedy of all time!

On the other hand, if down through the ages the Church had always followed this strategy then without much delay the Word of God would have been carried to every people in the world and from then on each new generation would have had the option of accepting or rejecting the Gospel. Would that not have been marvelous? Down through the centuries each people would have had ready access to God's Word, to the Gospel of Christ.

An Appeal

We can still do it, even if rather late (better late than never!). Consider. If beginning today the mass of Christ's followers would really take this strategy seriously then the following should occur: the many young people that God is calling will receive spiritual and financial backing from their churches. They should get adequate preparation, including the tools for dealing with other languages and cultures (recall that many of them have never been studied). Once prepared, they will be scattered all over the world, in the areas and with the peoples that do not have effective access to the Gospel. They will spend some two years acquiring a command of the local language and culture such that they can explain about Jesus without too much danger of inventing heresy. From then on there should be conversions and the springing up of new churches, where there had not been any. Now then, those churches should also embrace this missionary strategy of Christ and thus they will not only begin to evangelize their own 'Jerusalem' but also their 'Judea and Samaria'. In this way, within one generation, there would not remain a single place or people without ready access to the Gospel of Christ. For example, there are indigenous peoples in Brazil that received God's Word in their languages (for the first time) only a few years ago, yet the believers are not only concerned to reach the rest of their ethnic nation, their 'Judea', they also want to send missionaries to other peoples. (I am well aware that there are serious religious and political barriers out there to get in our way; I will take them up in another essay, but our Master holds the Key of David—Revelation 3:7.)

Let us cooperate with the Holy Spirit! Let us take Christ's commands seriously. Let us get behind those that God is calling to transcultural work. Let us motivate them to get adequate preparation and then move out to the fields of the world. Let us help them find an appropriate infrastructure with which to work so as to be more efficient. It may be necessary to help in the support of such infrastructures (missions). In short, let us do whatever may be necessary to reach the ends of the earth in our generation!

But, just a minute. The hard facts of life oblige us to speak a word of caution. Emotional appeals are not the answer. No one should think of taking on a transcultural challenge without preparing adequately. That preparation should include the technical tools for dealing with new languages and cultures. Even more important, absolutely necessary, the person needs to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ (total commitment) and must know how to conduct spiritual warfare. These two subjects occupy the following essays: "Make Disciples, not just Converts" and "Liberate People from the Power of Satan".

The Second Coming of Christ

I have lectured on the subject of transcultural missions many times. I have found that the most frequent question that is asked, in connection with Christ's return, has to do with Matthew 24:14. It is as good a place to start as any. "This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

The question most frequently posed is whether Christ can return before we reach the last ethnic nation. The temporal adverb "then" indicates that something has to happen first, in this case the preaching of the Gospel to each ethnic nation. That part of it seems clear enough. The interpretation of the verse depends on the meaning or reference of "the end". The end of what? I suppose all will agree that this day has an end, this week has an end, this month has an end, this year, this decade, etc., but they are distinct 'ends' that occur on different dates (usually). Similarly, in eschatology there are several 'ends'. This world has an end; the millennium has an end; the great tribulation has an end; this age of grace has an end—in my understanding of God's Word these ends are different and distinct, and will not coincide. So to which of these ends was Jesus referring in Matthew 24:14?

If He was referring to the end of the world or the end of the millennium then the passage has no bearing on Christ's return, for He will have already come. And it will not be our problem because during the millennium God Himself will see to it that all hear. "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD" (Jeremiah 31:34). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). If there is any part of the ocean without water then someone might get by without knowing the Lord. See also Revelation 21:24.

But if Jesus was referring to the end of the great tribulation, what then? Does Christ's return depend upon our missionary activity? I think not. Consider Revelation 14:6. "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every ethnic nation, tribe, tongue and people." Since this angelic activity takes place during the great tribulation, before its end each ethnic group will have been "evangelized", the speakers of each language will know the truth about God and His Kingdom. So Christ will be free to come and set up His Messianic (millennial) Kingdom.

Only if Jesus was referring to the end of this age of grace, the Church age, **and** if the pre-tribulation, or pre-wrath, rapture position is the correct one, do we have a problem—only in that event does Christ's return depend upon our missionary efforts. If the rapture of the Church precedes the great tribulation **and** if the last ethnic nation must hear the Gospel before the rapture can occur, then we are in a bad way! Since perhaps some 2,000 ethnic nations have yet to hear the Gospel, the time has come for all true believers to roll up their sleeves and do what can be done to reach those nations! Many of the transcultural missionaries at work around the world have precisely that understanding, and that is why they are missionaries—they are committing their lives to the effort of seeing the last ethnic nation reached so that Jesus can come again! I wish that everyone would feel that way and invest their lives to see Christ's great commission fulfilled. Would that it were so!

There is one interpretation of Acts 1:8 that should be mentioned here. This word of our Lord is usually taken to be a declaration with the practical effect of an order. However, there are those who say that Jesus' statement is a prophecy. The phrase "to the end of the earth" is indeed singular and can be understood to refer to the last place, or perhaps even the last ethnic group, on the earth. They argue that Jesus was addressing His disciples, so if His words were prophetic then it is His disciples who must reach the "last place". If their position is correct then it would appear that it is the **Church** that must finish reaching the world—we cannot 'pass the buck' to the angel of Revelation 14:6.

However, I myself do not understand the Sacred Text in the aforementioned ways. My theological training was strongly pre-tribulationist, but I have migrated to meso-tribulation position—I take it that the interpretation that does the best job of accommodating **all** the relevant passages (to build a position on just one or two of them is illicit) is the one that sees the rapture of the Church preceding the outpouring of God's wrath.¹ **However**, the Text does present us with some ambiguity; yes it does, which is why no one should attempt to declare the issue closed, much less to excommunicate anyone who disagrees.

¹ **Before or after? 2 Thessalonians 2:2 X 2:7-8**—In Matthew 24:44 we read, "Therefore you also be ready, because the Son of the Man is coming at an hour that you do not suppose." I take it that for there to be the element of surprise the Rapture of the Church must occur before the "abomination of desolation". When the Antichrist takes his place in the Holy of Holies and declares himself to be god there will be precisely 1,290 days until the return of Christ to the earth. "An hour that you do not suppose" presumably requires a pre-'abomination' rapture—if the rapture is pre-wrath but post-abomination, only a fool will be taken by surprise, unless the Rapture happens immediately after the 'abomination' (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Let's begin with 2 Thessalonians 2:2. Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts have 'day of the Lord' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.); the 85% that have 'day of Christ' (including the best line of transmission) are doubtless correct. I remember one day in a Greek exegesis class, the professor stated that one reason he preferred the 'critical' text (that reads 'Lord' here) is that it fit better with his view of eschatology—the 'Day of Christ' is usually associated with the Rapture and blessing of the saints, while the 'Day of the Lord' is usually associated with heavy judgment upon the world and unrepentant Israel, including the outpouring of wrath just before and after the Second Coming of Christ, when He returns in glory to establish His Millennial Reign. The perceived difficulty here would appear to be that while verses 1, 6 and 7 evidently relate to the Rapture, verses 3-4 and 8-10 evidently relate to the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming. What to do? Look carefully at the Text. In verse 2, why would the Thessalonian believers be "disturbed"? Someone was teaching that the Rapture had already happened and they had been left behind—I would be disturbed too! So 'day of Christ' is precisely correct with reference to the content of verses 1 and 2. The trouble comes in verse 3 because a clause is elided; as an aid to the reader translations usually supply a clause, preferably in italics, to show that it is an addition, as in NKJV—"that Day will not come". But that would put the Rapture after the revelation of the man of sin and the 'abomination of desolation'—definitely not congenial to certain eschatological systems. An easy 'solution' would be to change 'Christ' to 'Lord' in verse 2, but that would put the Rapture within the 'day of the Lord'—also not congenial. I submit that fine-tuning our view of eschatology is preferable to tampering with the Text.

If the 'Restrainer' in verses 6-8 is the Holy Spirit, then the Rapture happens before the 'abomination', and may be viewed as its 'trigger'. I translate verse 7 as follows: "For the mystery of the lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He removes Himself." Perhaps more literally, 'gets Himself out of the middle' (the verb *γινωμαι* is inherently middle in voice). I would say that the Holy Spirit is the only one who satisfies the description. But if the 'Day of Christ' includes the Rapture, then verse 3 would appear to place the Rapture after the 'abomination'. So where does that leave us? Although my own training was strongly 'pre-trib', I have moved to a 'meso-trib' position. If the Rapture follows immediately upon the 'abomination', then the 'surprise' factor remains untouched. If the 'abomination' and the Rapture happen within minutes of each other, then from God's point of view they form a single 'package', and the actual sequence is not important—for all practical purposes they happen at the same time.

Returning to Matthew 24:14, I understand that "the end" Jesus refers to is that of the great tribulation because immediately, in the next verse, He speaks of the "abomination of desolation", which will happen during that period. In that event, that angel in Revelation 14:6 will get us out of our predicament. Whatever is left undone by the Church that dear angel will complete. Ah blessed angel! But wait just a minute! Let no one cross his arms and say: "Well, since that angel is going to solve our problem we can stop worrying about it and do our own thing; those unreached peoples have already waited for all this time and they won't know the difference if they have to wait some more; it's their problem." Whoever thinks and acts in such a fashion will be severely punished at the judgment seat of Christ! We need to develop more respect for the final accounting—it is not going to be a soft touch!

Let us just suppose we are watching when a negligent believer has his turn; he is standing before the Judgment Seat. So Jesus asks him in what ways he exerted himself with a view to seeing His commands carried out. Then the self-centered believer begins to stammer: "Well, er, um, you know Lord; that angel, somewhere in Revelation doesn't it say something about an angel . . . ?" Does anyone actually imagine that Jesus will accept such a monstrously stupid argument? Be not deceived! Jesus will demand to know what we did about His **orders!**

Really, people, I very much doubt that He will insist that we be precisely correct about every detail in the end time chronology. Whatever for? If I am effectively living as a disciple, as His slave, if I am doing my best to please Him, if I am expending all my energies on behalf of His Kingdom, what difference does it make if I am mistaken about the time of the rapture? **But**, if my view of things leads me to be careless, to be negligent, then it is different. Unfortunately, many who defend the pre-tribulationist view, rather than spending themselves to 'bring back the King', are sitting around waiting for the rapture. If the news media report ever greater tragedies, they are pleased, because it means the rapture must be getting close—such an attitude is an aberration that does not derive from the doctrine itself. Strange to relate, many who criticize such pre-tribulationists are themselves doing little or nothing to fulfill the Great Commission. What is our problem?

Dear people, let us cut our losses. Let us give it all we have. If Christ returns before we reach the last ethnic nation, amen! If He comes upon our reaching that last one, hallelujah! If we finish the job and He still does not come, at least we can hope to hear His "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21). I trust no one wants to hear Him say, "You wicked and lazy servant!" (Matthew 25:26). Anything but that!

I wish to finish by insisting again upon the absolute necessity of our taking Christ's commands seriously. We may be completely certain; among all the things that will be required of us when we stand before Christ's Tribunal, none will be more weighty than **His commands**. So whatever your eschatological position may be, let us get on with obeying those **commands**. Shall we go for it? May God help us!

Conclusion

I have discussed seven missionary strategies of Christ. There may be others, of course, but these are the ones God moved me to present. The seven are:

- 1) Pray to the Lord of the harvest for laborers—being consistent.
- 2) **Simultaneously** reach our Jerusalem, our Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.
- 3) Preach the Gospel to every person—for no one is innocent.
- 4) Make **disciples**, not just converts.
- 5) Live for the Kingdom of God, not yourself.
- 6) Liberate people from the power of Satan.
- 7) Follow Jesus' example.²

I recognize that the my focus is transcultural, but then the commands of Christ and the heart of God encompass the world. If everything was progressing nicely, if we were hitting the bull's-eye of God's plan, there would be no need for this book; we could just keep on keeping on. But since our greatest omission involves the ends of the earth, the lost ethnic nations of the world, since it is this aspect of Christ's commands that has generally been most ignored, this is the side I have emphasized. However, do these strategies not have direct implications and applications for our churches, for our daily lives, for

² Strategies 3-7 are treated in separate essays in this book.

local evangelism and ministry? I think it obvious that they do. Again I say, these truths have the potential and the ability to transform our lives, our homes, our churches, our society, maybe even our world!

Frankly, if across the board we got serious about just one, any one, it would take only one, of these strategies nothing could stop the Church. But if we get serious about two, three or all (why not all?) of them, then we can certainly finish reaching the world within this generation.

It will be worth it to set aside our egotism, our meanness, our provincialism, our ethnocentricity, our merely personal ambitions, our denominationalism, in short our smallness of spirit—all things that Satan exploits to neutralize our potential—it will be worth it to set such things aside and join forces to reach our common objective. Let us learn from each other. The time is short; we can no longer afford the 'luxury' of learning everything on our own, forever repeating the same mistakes. A certain analysis of missionary history in Central America, which I consider to be highly significant, distinguished three phases in the relationship between the foreign missionaries and the national leadership that emerged as a result of the missionary activity. The first phase is characterized by paternalism: the missionaries tend to belittle the opinion of the local believers, imposing their own ideas and the religious culture of their home country. The second phase is characterized by a nationalistic reaction: the local leadership repays in kind, rejecting the ideas (and sometimes the participation) of the missionaries. In the third phase a level of spiritual and emotional maturity is reached such that all concerned can work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, each one contributing what he can do best. It is natural for a victim of paternalism to want to get even, and in fact some intransigent paternalists may require rough treatment, but we really must do all we can to get to phase three as soon as possible. The challenge we face demands a united effort, it demands the best that each one can give.

I propose the following. We must humble ourselves before God and His Word, doing our best to distinguish between the true values of the Kingdom and the values of our own religious and national culture. Dear friends, we must reach the point of giving priority to the values of God's Kingdom—whenever there is a clash between some value of the Kingdom and some value of our culture (be it national or religious), **the value of the Kingdom must prevail**. Please, people, to elevate our values above God's values is a form of idolatry! May God help us to quit it! Consider: if we proceed in that fashion we will have a common ground where no human culture is considered to be better than any other and thus it should be possible to work together in harmony. What do you think, will it not be worth it?

There are other things that divide us; polarizations exist that just might go beyond what the Sacred Text teaches. When we impose our ideas on the Text and take radical positions on the basis of those ideas, we give lots of room to Satan to work in our midst and we become unwilling to respect each other or to work together. That said, however, we should insist upon the objective authority of the Biblical Text. We need to close ranks around the fundamental truths that define our Faith.

To conclude, I invite the reader's attention to an interesting detail. It is this: in each version of the Great Commission that we find in the Gospels and Acts there is a declaration of **power**. "All power (authority) has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). "These signs will follow those who believe:" (Mark 16:17). ". . . until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). "Receive the Holy Spirit!" (John 20:22). "You shall receive power" (Acts 1:8). The mainspring is the power that the Holy Spirit gives us. Without His power we will not make it. So then, my fellow-servants, let us consciously submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit so as to walk full of His power, because in this way we will be able to fulfill the commands of our Master—even to the point of finishing to reach the world in this generation.

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